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MBK-0027

7 October 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS
THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group
SUBJECT : Monthly Report - Bangkok Bureau - September 1981

I. GENERAL

With very little guidance or assistance from the Embassy, the bureau formally entered the new Embassy housing program when recently arrived staffers [] took up residence in assigned U.S.-leased apartments. Fortunately, the move coincided with the delivery of the first set of Thai-made all-teak furniture purchased by the bureau. Another six sets of furniture were ordered in mid-month upon receipt of funding authorization from E&PS. The sudden entry into the furniture business required some internal renovations at Bang Ping and construction of moveable partitions to increase the storage area. Work began in late month.

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In a related but unwelcomed development, the Embassy reduced the Living Quarters Allowance by almost 10 percent during the month, thus ending the short breathing spell the other staffers had enjoyed as a result of the baht devaluation declared by the Bank of Thailand in July.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. Although the 36th session of the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to grant credentials to Democratic Kampuchea, this by no means lessened the intensity of volume of the communist propaganda machines led by Hanoi. Both the UNGA

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vote and the Son San, Khieu Samphan and Norodom Sikanouk representatives' meetings held in Bangkok to form an anti-Vietnamese coalition prompted sarcastic and increasingly abusive comment from PRK media and officials. In practical terms, the events and aftermath enlivened the Cambodian and Vietnamese sections and increased production.

2. Due to poor reception of Manila FEBC [redacted] Bureau, Bangkok assumed coverage responsibility for Manila FEBC International Service and Okinawa Bureau's Hong Kong AFP Philippines coverage. The bureau also plans to initiate subscriptions to several Manila newspapers. Hong Kong will retain coverage of Baguio Mountain Province Broadcasting Corporation, which is unheard at Bangkok.

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3. To assist Okinawa in its satellite cruising program, the bureau wirefiled in early September a 7-day sampling of lengthy program schedules of Kuala Lumpur television gleaned from the Malaysian press. The bureau is presently reviewing the tapes forwarded by Okinawa to verify program content and scheduling.

B. Lateral Services

1. To improve service to both local and Headquarters consumers, the bureau instituted procedures 1 October to wirefile a weekly compilation of drug briefs from voice, press and press agency sources. The list, along with all wirefiled drug-related items, are forwarded every Monday to the Embassy mailroom for delivery to the State Department's Narcotics Control Unit. The new procedures do not affect drug photos, which will continue to be pouched periodically to Headquarters.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

1. The bureau chief visited Australia in late month to interview monitor applicants for the Cambodian monitor slot made vacant at the end of August by the resignation of [redacted]. A total of five applicants were interviewed and tested in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne; a sixth candidate, residing virtually in the Outback, could not be contacted. Final evaluation of the tests is underway as this is written.

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2. [redacted] wife of the bureau engineer, entered on duty 20 September as the bureau's new contract secretary. Although hampered by the lack of an overlap with her predecessor, Mary was making good progress by the end of the month in learning office procedures and adjusting to the personal habits of the chief and deputy chief.

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3. On 1 October, the State Department announced an 8.9-percent across-the-board cost of living increase, plus a fringe benefit adjustment of 1,947, baht for the Mission's foreign national employees effective the first pay period in FY-1982.

B. Building and Grounds

1. A meeting of all Mission component heads was held on the 25th to discuss space and operational requirements for a new Embassy building proposed for construction within the compound across the driveway from the current chancellery. After a brief, general discussion of plans to finance the new building, each component was requested to submit a detailed memorandum of its space requirements. The bureau subsequently responded as requested, emphasizing in its memo FBIS operational needs for a top-floor location and interference-free antenna locations. According to the Administrative counselor, who chaired the meeting, ground-breaking is planned for late 1982 if construction plans and financial arrangements are approved by that time.

2. The first significant renovations since the bureau moved to Shell House in late 1975 were initiated during the month. An improved slot editor desk arrangement; enlargement of library facilities, including a fold-away map rack; new tile and duct work for the kitchen (required for safety reasons); and new carpeting on the operations floor are the major activities. Bang Ping storage space is also being enhanced (See I. GENERAL) and exhaust fans installed to improve air circulation.

IV. VISITS

1. [redacted] arrived 4 September to examine technical facilities and to discuss Engineering Division plans and developments. Erv departed 9 September, and Chuck the 11th. 25X

2. Bureau administrative assistant [redacted] departed 8 September to attend the Foreign National Orientation program in Headquarters 14-18 September. 25X

3. Editors [redacted] visited the Station on 14 September for a briefing by NFAC representative [redacted] and reports officer [redacted] on area developments and use of FBIS material. 25X

[redacted]
Chief, Bangkok Bureau, FBIS 25X

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Attachments:

Engineering

Production Report

Production Report by Language, Country & Source

Distribution

C/Okinawa Bureau

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